



State of Utah


DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

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September 11, 2002

TO: Minerals File

FROM: Paul Baker, Senior Reclamation Specialist 

RE: Site Inspection, International Uranium, Rim/Columbus Mine, M/037/006, San Juan County, Utah

Date of Inspection: August 14, 2002
Time of Inspection: About 4:20 to 6:00 p.m.
Conditions: Mostly clear, 80's
Participants: Doug Jensen and Paul Baker, DOGM

Purpose of Inspection:

The Division is scheduled to do the bond review this year, so we wanted to become familiar with the site.

Getting to the site:

About 12 miles east of Monticello on US highway 666, there is a road leading south toward the town of Eastland. One mile farther east is a road leading north which is county road 313. Take this second road north about 16 miles to an intersection a mile north of Summit Point. Turn left and follow this road, county road 324, for about five miles almost to the edge of the plateau. The Rim Mine is just to the south along the edge and is hard to miss.

To get to the Columbus and Humbug Mines, go back east from the mine on county road 324 for about 0.8 miles. Turn north and follow the road as it veers west through Pine Hollow then southwest down the slope. The Columbus and Humbug Mines were easy to find; the portal and dump just north of the Humbug Mine was not as easy to see. I did not record mileages.

Observations:

Our observations were fairly general in nature. The Rim Mine is, as the name suggests, at the edge of a plateau. Included in the facilities at the Rim Mine are a headframe, a waste pile of about one acre, power poles and transformers, some ponds, and some old buildings (see Photos 1-3). The support below the transformers was apparently broken and being held up by a pole. The operator needs to correct this problem.

Below the waste pile is a small, apparently natural wetland and an impoundment dam that has been breached. There are also some berms that would direct some runoff into this impoundment, but most runoff from the site would not be treated.

The Columbus and Humbug Mines are below the rim on the slope leading to the valley below. Going down the road, the Columbus Mine is the first one encountered. Facilities at this site consist of an old, dilapidated tibble (Photo 4), a waste pile, and an unsecured portal in a decline (photo 5). There is a lot of erosion coming off from the waste pile and getting the drainage (Photo 6). The waste pile is on top of the drainage.

Just before getting to the Humbug Mine, we found another portal and waste pile, and although the workings at this portal are connected with the workings from the Rim, Columbus, and Humbug Mines, the facilities are apparently not associated with International Uranium. This portal is not secured (Photo 7), and the waste pile is, like the pile at Columbus, constructed over the drainage and eroding badly.

Some work was done at the Humbug Mine in about 1998 or 1999, but most of the site was not reaffected. We found some piles of what appeared to be low grade ore mostly north and above the portal (Photo 8).

There is a decline cut into the sandstone leading to the portal (Photo 9). The gate over the portal was not secured.

There is a berm on the edge of the waste pile, and it has been breached in one location with waste eroding into the drainage below. Much of the drainage from the mine area would flow into the decline and the portal.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

Since 1975, the Columbus Mine has only been used for ventilation, and there is a letter in the file from the Division dated August 6, 1985, stating that the operator's only responsibility at this site is to seal the portal. Until the portal is permanently sealed, it needs to be temporarily secured to prevent entry by the public. I was told in a telephone conversation on September 10, 2002, with Terry Wetz from International Uranium and in another phone call with Jim Butt, a contractor working for International Uranium, on September 11, 2002, that this had been done. Mr. Butt said the material used to backfill the portal was mounded in an attempt to keep water from piping into the portal.

I am not sure who is responsible for the portal near the Humbug Mine. Terry Wetz of International Uranium indicated it may have been worked by Jim Butt and that it may have been called the Sunshine Mine, but Mr. Butt said he did not operate in this mine. Ted McDougall of the BLM is not familiar with the Sunshine Mine and has no record of it. If the mine was worked before 1980, he would not have any record. Mr. Wetz indicated International Uranium might be willing to backfill the portal when they have equipment on site, but he is reluctant to do this if another operator might still want to use the site. However, since the site is on BLM land and the BLM has no record of it, it is probably abandoned. The next time International Uranium has equipment in the area, they could consider

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backfilling this portal.

According to Mr. Butt and Mr. Wetz, the Humbug Mine portal has now been backfilled with ore that was pulled out of the mine in about 1997-1999. Mr. Butt said he left a depression about 6-7 feet deep in the decline and that drainage from above the portal is directed into this depression. I understand he also repaired the berm on the outside edge of the waste disposal area.

Since the inspection was done, I have been told the operator has cleaned up some garbage at the Rim Mine and has removed the three transformers on the unstable support. There are still some transformers at the mine.

cc: Ted McDougall, Monticello BLM

Terry Wetz, international Uranium

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ATTACHMENT

Photographs
M/037/006
Rim/Columbus Mine



Photo 1. Rim Mine with waste pile near the center just beyond the vehicle.



Photo 2. Headframe at the Rim Mine.



Photo 3. Some of the facilities at the Rim Mine.



Photo 4. Tippie or loadout at the Columbus Mine.



Photo 5. Columbus Portal.



Photo 6. Waste pile at the Columbus Mine. Note the large amount of material in the drainage.



Photo 7. Portal at site near the Humbug Mine.



Photo 8. Low grade ore or waste at the Humbug Mine.



Photo 9. Humbug Mine Portal.